The p***y controversy revisited

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

I covered the entire only-in-Blighty Sensible Software versus The Royal British Legion pallava in my Cannon Fodder review so won't rehash it here, save for a kooky tidbit that was missed at the time of the furore.

Amiga Power's publishers naively assumed they had averted another press backlash when - behind acting editor Stuart Campbell's back - they switched the original, controversial poppy-themed cover of issue 32 with a fence-sitting, safe alternative featuring a screenshot of Cannon Fodder. Little did they know that just over the page amongst the contents was the charming sound-bite, "Old soldiers? I wish them all dead", along with a credit reference to Adolf Hitler who took care of book burning duties for this issue.

The Royal British Legion and Daily Star who sensationalised the initial poppy-decimating story (as they would have it) were clearly ignorant of the game's depths and intentions, but to wish war veterans dead was perhaps a tad excessive, no?

Already incensed, had they latched onto the origins of the (elaborated) one-liner they might have fatally choked on their sense of outrage. 'I Wish Them All Dead' is, in fact, the title of a track from British alternative rock band, The Wonder Stuff's 1993 album, 'Construction For The Modern Idiot'. It's a heart-warming sweary tirade against paedophiles, and the North American Man/Boy Love Association in particular. In it the band advocate the use of "any weapon you like" to dispatch the people involved in such practices. For good measure, the lyrics are fleshed out with an appetite for "cancerous decay" that "puts an end to their days".

In the November 1993 edition of Q Magazine, The Wonder Stuff's vocalist and guitarist, Miles Hunt, reflects on the song's animus:-

> "On the Banshees tour in America I saw a Roger Cook-type programme about the Man Boy Love Association, which showed these guys of about 25 years being secretly filmed in a library, swapping all this paedophile material. That was one of the classic times when I was in a hotel room shouting at the telly. And 'I Wish Them All Dead'- it's a terrible thing to admit to but it's something I say quite a lot when I'm driving: 'I wish you dead c***'. And I'm always being told off for it, so I've started saying 'I wish you the worst of luck sir', but that's not a very good song title... 'I Wish Them All Dead' was going to start off with the MBLA, then go down a list of people I wish dead. Then I thought, No, cos each area I've got to justify, because I'm not a 20-year old making hateful little pop tunes anymore. I'm 27 and don't want to be a brat who just stamps around moaning 'I'm pissed off'. So we stuck to the MBLA because I DO wish them all dead. The ending is the old Randall & Hopkirk tune, which we've never gone back and checked, but it's another good pun. Randall & Hopkirk (deceased)...dead. Hmm, funny. One reason I was drawn to Vic Reeves the first time I saw him onstage was because he had the white suit and black hair like Marty Hopkirk."

What an amiable dinner party guest *he'd* make! I'm delighted to hear that by the age of 27 he had emanated from a chrysalis of arbitrary malevolence to flourish as a far more rational and virtuous butterfly. There's nothing at all wrong with a spot of mortiferous vigilante brutality as long as it's clearly focused. That's what my dear old Grandma used to say.

Strangely enough, when Amiga Power's publishing director, Greg Ingham, went into damage limitation mode, issuing the statement, "I would like to apologise to the Royal British Legion and anyone else who was offended" with regards to

the "regrettable mistake" of including Stuart's comments, he failed to mention the connection to the NAMBLA song.

Perhaps it wouldn't have been wise to add insult to injury by pointing out that Stuart was not only hankering for the untimely demise of war veterans, but also evoking the sentiments of a vicious anti-paedophile song in doing so. I wonder if the insinuation was that one group of people are as bad as the other, or if he just thought it would be edgy to wink in the direction of a dissident, polemical rock band.